

**CLAIMS:**

1. A method for promoting an artist, the method comprising the following steps:
  - 5 (a) receiving personal data entered into a vending machine at a point of sale, said personal data including details of a specific recipient to whom computer readable data produced in the guise of said artist is to be sent, and
  - 10 (b) using said personal data to format in real time a personalized computer readable message created in the guise of the artist and dedicated to the specific recipient so as to form a computer readable data string that may be dispensed by the vending machine without requiring real time interaction by the artist.
2. The method according to Claim 1, further including:  
merging the computer readable data string with a computer readable work of  
15 art in real time so as to form a composite computer readable data string that may be dispensed by the vending machine.
3. The method according to Claim 2, wherein the computer readable work of art is stored in the vending machine.
4. The method according to Claim 1, being carried out by a remote server  
20 coupled to the vending machine.
5. The method according to Claim 4, further including the following step carried out by the remote server:  
uploading the computer readable data string to the vending machine.
6. The method according to Claim 1, further including:  
25 copying the computer readable data string to a portable data carrier for dispensing immediately by the vending machine.
7. The method according to Claim 1, further including:  
transmitting the computer readable data string to a remote repository for access by the specific recipient.

8. The method according to Claim 1, wherein step (b) includes:
- i) obtaining a generic computer readable message created by said artist and including gaps for inserting personalized computer readable data therein, and
  - 5 ii) inserting into the gaps respective computer readable data strings corresponding to said personalized computer readable data for personalizing the generic computer readable message for the specific recipient.
9. The method according to Claim 1, wherein the personalized computer
- 10 readable message comprises pre-recorded computer readable strings.
10. The method according to Claim 1, wherein the personalized computer readable message comprises vocally synthesized computer readable strings.
11. The method according to Claim 8, wherein the computer readable data strings are vocally synthesized.
- 15 12. The method according to Claim 8, wherein the computer readable data strings are at least partially pre-recorded.
13. The method according to Claim 12 further including:
- i) storing a plurality of computer readable data strings each pre-created by said artist and being selectable by a user,
  - 20 ii) allowing selection of respective ones of the computer readable data strings for insertion into the generic message, and
  - iii) inserting the selected computer readable data strings into the generic computer readable message.
14. A method for promoting an artist, the method comprising the following
- 25 steps carried out by a vending machine at a point of sale:
- (a) receiving personal data including details relating to a specific recipient,
  - (b) uploading the personal data to a server coupled to the vending machine,

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a user interface for receiving personal data including details relating to a specific recipient, and

10 18. The vending machine according to Claim 15 further comprising:

15 19. The vending machine according to Claim 18 further including a memory for  
storing the computer readable work of art.

21. The vending machine according to Claim 18 further including a communication port for coupling to a remote server storing the computer readable work of art.

25 23. The vending machine according to Claim 15 further including a copying unit for copying data representative of the computer readable data string to a portable data carrier for dispensing by the vending machine.

24. The vending machine according to Claim 18 further including a copying  
unit for copying data representative of the computer readable data string to a  
30 portable data carrier for dispensing by the vending machine.

25. A portable data carrier bearing thereon a personalized computer readable message that is created according to the method of Claim 1.

26. A method for marketing a computer readable work of art stored on or in association with a vending machine at a point of sale, the method comprising the following steps:

- (a) receiving personal data including details relating to a specific recipient,
- (b) using said personal data to format in real time a personalized computer readable message created by a sponsor dedicating the computer readable work of art to the specific recipient without requiring real time interaction by the sponsor, and
- (c) merging the personalized computer readable message with the computer readable work of art in real time so as to form a composite computer readable data string that may be dispensed by the vending machine.

27. The method according to Claim 26 wherein the computer readable work of art is stored in the vending machine.

28. The method according to Claim 26, wherein the sponsor is an author of the computer readable work of art.

29. The method according to Claim 26 wherein the sponsor is a purchaser of the composite computer readable data string.

30. The method according to Claim 26 being carried out by a remote server coupled to the vending machine.

31. The method according to Claim 30 further including the following step carried out by the remote server:

uploading the composite computer readable data string to the vending machine.

32. The method according to Claim 26 further including:

copying the composite computer readable data string to a portable data carrier for dispensing immediately by the vending machine.

33. The method according to Claim 26 further including:  
transmitting the composite computer readable data string to a remote repository for access by the specific recipient.

34. The method according to Claim 26 wherein step (b) includes:

- 5 i) obtaining a generic computer readable message created by said sponsor and including gaps for inserting personalized computer readable data therein, and
- ii) inserting into the gaps respective computer readable data strings corresponding to said personalized computer readable data for personalizing the generic computer readable message for the specific  
10 recipient.

35. The method according to Claim 26 wherein the personalized computer readable message comprises pre-recorded computer readable data strings.

36. The method according to Claim 26 wherein the personalized computer  
15 readable message comprises vocally synthesized computer readable strings.

37. The method according to Claim 35 wherein the computer readable data strings are vocally synthesized.

38. The method according to Claim 36 wherein the computer readable data strings are at least partially pre-recorded.

20 39. The method according to Claim 34 further including:

- iii) storing a plurality of computer readable data strings each pre-created by said sponsor and being selectable by a user,
- iv) allowing selection of respective ones of the computer readable data strings for insertion into the generic message, and
- 25 v) inserting the selected computer readable data strings into the generic computer readable message.

40. A method for marketing a computer readable work of art stored on or in association with a vending machine at a point of sale, the method comprising the following steps carried out by the vending machine:

- (a) receiving personal data including details relating to a specific recipient,
- (b) uploading the personal data to a server coupled to the vending machine,
- 5 (c) receiving from the server in real time a composite computer readable data string including a personalized computer readable message created by a sponsor dedicating the computer readable work of art to the specific recipient and being merged with the work of art without requiring real time interaction by the sponsor, and
- 10 (d) supplying the composite computer readable data string to the specific recipient.

41. A program storage device readable by machine, tangibly embodying a program of instructions executable by the machine to perform method steps for marketing a computer readable work of art stored on or in association with a vending machine at a point of sale, the method comprising the following steps:

- (a) receiving personal data including details relating to the specific recipient,
- (b) using said personal data to format in real time a personalized computer readable message created by a sponsor dedicating the computer readable work of art to the specific recipient without requiring real time interaction by the sponsor, and
- 20 (c) merging the personalized computer readable message with the computer readable work of art in real time so as to form a composite computer readable data string that may be dispensed by the vending machine.

25 42. A computer program product comprising a computer useable medium having computer readable program code embodied therein for marketing a computer readable work of art stored on or in association with a vending machine at a point of sale, the computer program product comprising:

computer readable program code for causing the computer to receive personal data including details relating to the specific recipient,

computer readable program code for causing the computer to use said personal data to format in real time a personalized computer readable message  
5 created by a sponsor dedicating the computer readable work of art to the specific recipient without requiring real time interaction by the sponsor, and

computer readable program code for causing the computer to merge the personalized computer readable message with the computer readable work of art in real time so as to form a composite computer readable data string that may be  
10 dispensed by the vending machine.

43. A vending machine for marketing a computer readable work of art, the vending machine comprising:

a user interface for receiving personal data including details relating to a specific recipient,

15 a message formatter for using said personal data to format in real time a personalized computer readable message created by a sponsor dedicating the computer readable work of art to the specific recipient without requiring real time interaction by the sponsor, and

a merging unit coupled to the message formatter for merging the personali-  
20 zed computer readable message with the computer readable work of art in real time so as to form a composite computer readable data string that may be dispensed by the vending machine.

44. The vending machine according to Claim 43 further including a memory for storing the computer readable work of art.

25 45. The vending machine according to Claim 43 further including a memory for storing the personalized computer readable message.

46. The vending machine according to Claim 43 further including a communication port for coupling to a remote server storing the computer readable work of art.



47. The vending machine according to Claim 43 further including a communication port for coupling to a remote server storing the personalized computer readable message.

48. The vending machine according to Claim 43 further including a copying  
5 unit for copying data representative of the composite computer readable data string to a portable data carrier for dispensing by the vending machine.

49. A portable data carrier bearing thereon a personalized computer readable message that is merged with a computer readable work of art according to the method of Claim 26